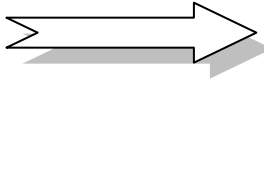


# The Frankenstein essay

Honors European Literature / Wright / 2012

Your thesis



## Salon Packet

The following items should be gathered and bound into a packet to be used before, during, and after the salon

- Beethoven's ninth chorale mark-up
- Raft of the Medusa sketch and notes
- Completed Hero's Journey chart for Frankenstein
- Lucy Assignment
- Class Notes
- Prometheus handout
- Listening Activity: Responses to Handout questions on Radio Lab Episode, "So Called Life"
- Reading Guide questions for reading assignment #1 (chapters 1-5)
- Reading Guide questions 1-5 for reading assignment # 2 (chapters 6-12)
- Reading Guide questions 1-3 for reading assignment #3 (chapters 13-16)
- Guide questions 1-3 for reading assignment #4 (chapters 17-24)
- Mark-up of Atwood's poem, "Speeches for Dr. Frankenstein"
- Salon activity notes

Posted on your wikipage:

- Beethoven's Ninth Explication
- "So Called Life" podcast listening assignment
- Listening Assignment: "Making Better People"
- Final essay outline (includes thesis statement and documented support analyzed and explained)

## Salon Prep Questions

Use the following questions to help you develop arguments for the salon:

**What** is the price Victor Frankenstein pays for "treading in God's domain"?

**Did** Frankenstein create life or did he simply twist death?

**Why** did Shelly use the following quotation from Paradise Lost as the epigraph for the novel?

Did I request thee, Maker from my clay  
To mold me man? Did I solicit thee  
From darkness to promote me?

**How** are the monster and his creator the antithetical halves of a single being?

**Does** Victor Frankenstein's tragedy stem from his Promethean excess, his own moral error, or his failure to love?

**Does** Victor Frankenstein win our attention only by his primordial crime against original nature

# What do you think?

## Perfection

**One must not get caught up in the idea of one's own imperfection.** Because in doing so one realizes that perfection does not beget imperfection and thus it is not possible for anything or anyone to be entirely perfect.

How does Victor's recognition of his own imperfection cause his downfall?

Is the recognition of imperfection the reason the monster believes he can never be free?

## Perfect storms — *continued* by Margaret Atwood,

'Perfect storms' occur when a number of different forces coincide. So it is with the storms of human history. As novelist Alistair MacLeod has said, writers write about what worries them, and the world of *Oryx and Crake* is what worries me right now. It's not a question of our inventions — all human inventions are merely tools — but of what might be done with them; for no matter how high

the tech, *homo sapiens sapiens* remains at heart what he's been for tens of thousands of years — the same emotions, the same preoccupations. To quote poet George Meredith,

. . . In tragic life, God wot,  
No villain need be! Passions spin the plot:  
We are betrayed by what is false within.

## Why not seize this power?

In his essay, "**Treading in God's Domain**", Lee M. Silver argues that nearly every culture has cautionary tales (Garden of Eden, Tower of Babel, Prometheus, etc.). He then asks, why is the line between the domain of humans and the domain of God been drawn at different places by different people? He ends his essay with the following statement:

Human essence came into existence simply because those with it could out-compete and kill those without it. But if human minds have the ability to contemplate and direct changes in the copies of their own genomes that they give to future generations, the human mind is much more than the

genes that brought it into existence. While selfish genes do, indeed, control all other forms of life, master and slave have switched positions in human beings, who now have the power not only to control but to create new genes for themselves.

Why not seize this power? Why not control what has been left to chance in the past? Indeed, we control all other aspects of our children's lives and identities through powerful social and environmental influences and, in some cases, with the use of powerful drugs like Ritalin or Prozac. On what basis can we reject positive genetic influences on a person's essence when we accept the rights of parents to benefit their children in every other way?

## The origin of the name Frankenstein

Frankenstein was a name well known in Germany when Mary Shelley visited Darmstadt Germany months before she penned her famous novel titled Frankenstein. When she revisited Darmstadt Germany years later she wrote in her diary that the surrounding ruins and hills spoke volumes about German history. The Frankenstein Ruins overlook Darmstadt and sit on Magnet mountain. Frankenstein was a name filled with romantic imagery to the Hessen Germans. Johann Wolfgang Goethe influenced the Hessen mind and was an important statesman and scientist much like his American contemporary and fellow Freestone Mason Benjamin Franklin. Goethe and his fellow initiates would meet at the Frankenstein ruins. The name is a metaphor not only for Free stone (Frank), (stein), but also for the Holy Grail a free (Frank) stone cup (Stein) from which Christ last drank. A chalice which imparted a powerful knowledge to those that drank from it. The symbolism of the name Frankenstein was not lost on Mary Shelley or Goethe. Mary Shelley was very

interested in the meaning of names "What's in a name I can dwell for hours on the meaning of a name"..... Shelley was taking her cue from Shakespeare with this thought. Goethe would read from his novel "The Sorrows of Young Werther" at the Frankenstein Ruins, a novel read by Shelley's fictional monster, in Frankenstein. Goethe's work caused an epidemic of suicides when it was published referred to as Werthercide, it was so depressing. It is no wonder that the Frankenstein monster was so dysfunctional, learning to read with Goethe's novel so soon after his creator had abandoned him.

(source:  
<http://frankensteinweb.com/whatsinaname.htm>)